



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ACTION MEMORANDUM

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November 3, 1977

TO: The Secretary
FROM: HA - Patricia M. Derian
SUBJECT: Request for Use of Parole Authority to Admit Soviet Refugees into United States

ISSUE FOR DECISION

At the present time, there is a backlog of approximately 4,000 Soviet refugees, mostly Jews, in Italy. The current rate of influx exceeds 1,000 per month. The high majority of these refugees seek immigration to the United States and most are prima facie eligible for admission. Owing to the limited opportunities for admission under regular U.S. immigration procedures, it is estimated that the backlog in Italy will exceed 5,000 at the end of 1977. There is a need to relieve the pressures resulting from this accumulation of refugees which could give the Soviets a pretext to cut back on the issuance of exit visas to Soviet Jews. Moreover, there is a need to minimize the expenses to the United States Refugee Program (USRP) for the care and maintenance of these refugees in Italy.

ESSENTIAL FACTORS

The increased break-off rate in Vienna of Soviet refugees en route to Israel (approximately 50 percent of total flow) and somewhat increased rate in the flow of third country program (TCP) cases from the Soviet Union have concomitantly increased the caseload of Soviet refugees in Italy awaiting processing for U.S.

immigration. There are some 4,000 Soviet refugees, mainly Jews, in Italy at the present time and it is estimated that the backlog there will exceed 5,000 at the end of the year. There is also a limited number (approximately 200) ex-USSR refugees in Italy who had resettled in Israel with U.S. support and who received Israeli citizenship. Such cases would not be eligible for this parole action.

The limited availability of Conditional Entry numbers under Section 203(a)(7) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) as well as a lack of non-preference visa numbers has resulted in a decreasing rate of processing for U.S. immigration. Other demands on the available Conditional Entry numbers make prospects dim that the situation in Italy will improve in the foreseeable future.

Similar situations existed in 1973, 1974 and 1976 at which times special programs were instituted through the Attorney General's parole authority under Section 212(d)(5) of the INA to clear up the backlogs.

Congressman Joshua Eilberg, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship and International Law, wrote to you on October 20, 1977 requesting you to recommend to the Attorney General that he exercise his authority under Section 212(d)(5) of the INA to parole into the United States 5,000 refugees from the Soviet Union within the six month period ending May 1, 1978. Senator Edward Kennedy also favors the use of the parole authority for this purpose; however, he would prefer to have the parole authority exercised for this purpose on a continuing stand-by basis without numerical limitations.

We believe the use of the parole authority for this purpose would be consistent with Congressional intent for assistance to Soviet refugees and in keeping with our own humanitarian traditions.

BUREAU VIEWS

HA, EUR, CA, H and NEA concur in recommending the use of the parole authority for this purpose.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the attached letter to the Attorney General recommending that he exercise his parole authority under Section 212(d)(5) of the INA to permit the admission into the United States of 5,000 Soviet refugees from Italy within the six month period ending May 1, 1978. The letter also recommends that the Attorney General exercise his parole authority for such refugees on a continuing need basis beyond that date, or until such time as appropriate legislation is enacted to authorize their admission under regular immigration procedures.

Attachments:

1. Letter to the Attorney General.
2. Letter dated October 20, 1977 from Congressman Eilberg.
3. Letter dated October 28, 1977 from Senator Kennedy.

Clearances: EUR/SOV - Mr. Willems (draft)

CA - Mr. DeWitt (draft)

NEA/IAI - Mr. Kulick (draft)

H - Mr. Krizek (draft)

P - Mr. Tice (draft)

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